

Message Text

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APPROVED BY EUR/ RPM: RJMCGUIRE

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION NATO IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 070494

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, US, RQ

SUBJECT: BASE REALIGNMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

FOR AMBASSADOR RUMSFELD

1. THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WILL ANNOUNCE HERE ON TUESDAY, APRIL 17, 1973, AT OR ABOUT 11 AM WASHINGTON TIME A SERIES OF BASE REALIGNMENT ACTIONS, INCLUDING SEVERAL CLOSURES. DETAILS BEING TREATED ON VERY CLOSE- HOLD BASIS UNTIL THAT TIME.

2. THE ACTION INVOLVES ONLY INSTALLATIONS IN THE 50 STATES PLUS PUERTO RICO, NO OVERSEAS ACTIONS.

3. THE PURPOSE OF THE REALIGNMENTS, WILL PERMIT ELIMINATION OF A LARGE NUMBER OF MILITARY AND CIVILIAN SPACES IN THE US, TO MEET PROGRAMMED END STRENGTHS AND EFFECT SAVINGS
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IN A MANNER THAT WILL PERMIT EFFICIENT CONTINUING SUPPORT OF EXISTING FORCES. ALTHOUGH THE ACTION INVOLVES CHANGES IN HOMEPORT ASSIGNMENTS FOR SOME NATO- COMMITTED SHIPS, IT WILL NOT AFFECT IN ANY WAY OUR FORCE COMMITMENTS TO NATO, NOR THE READINESS OF NATO- COMMITTED FORCES, EITHER HERE OR IN EUROPE.

4. YOU ARE AUTHORIZED TO PROVIDE YOUR NATO COLLEAGUES THE INFORMATION SET FORTH ABOVE, AFTER THE CONGRESS HAS BEEN ADVISED AT 2 PM, MONDAY, APRIL 16, 1973, WASHINGTON TIME. YOU SHOULD, HOWEVER, STILL EMPHASIZE THE CLOSE- HOLD NATURE OF THE INFORMATION UNTIL RELEASED ONCE RICE HAS ALREADY BEEN PURCHASED IN THE UNITED STATES; WE HAVE ALSO FINANCED THE PURCHASE IN THAILAND OF A QUANTITY OF 60,000 TONS, NOT INCLUDING AN ADDITIONAL QUANTITY OF 40,000 TONS WHICH IT IS HOPED TO PROCURE LATER THIS YEAR IN THAILAND.

C. UNFORTUNATELY RICE IS IN VERY SHORT SUPPLY IN WORLD MARKETS. STOCKS IN THE U. S. AVAILABLE FOR EXPORT ARE EXHAUSTED AND ADDITIONAL PURCHASES FOR EXPORT CANNOT BE MADE UNTIL FOLLOWING THE NEXT HARVEST, THAT IS, IN OCTOBER. STOCKS IN THAILAND WILL ALSO BE SMALLER THAN NORMAL AND ONLY 5,000 TONS OF THE ADDITIONAL 40,000 TONS WHICH ARE REQUIRED ARE IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE.

D) GIVEN THIS SEVERE SHORTAGE OF RICE NOW EXISTING AND FORESEEN FOR THE FUTURE, IT SEEMS TO US INDISPENSABLE TO WORK OUT A CAREFUL AND STRICT DISTRIBUTION OF STOCKS IN PHNOM PENH. HOWEVER, THE STOCKS ARE BEING DRAWN DOWN AT A CONSIDERABLE HIGHER RATE THAN HERETOFORE. DELIVERIES OF RICE FROM WAREHOUSES IN PHNOM PENH BETWEEN NOVEMBER 1972 AND JANUARY 1973 DID NOT EXCEED AN AVERAGE OF 367 TONS PER DAY. BUT DAILY DRAWDOWNS FROM FEBRUARY 15 TO APRIL 9 REACHED AN AVERAGE OF 597 TONS, AN INCREASE OF 62 PERCENT. IT IS PERTINENT TO NOTE THAT YOUR ANNUAL IMPORT REQUIREMENTS WERE CALCULATED ON THE BASIS OF A DAILY DRAWDOWN OF 450 TONS.

E) IF MEASURES ARE NOT TAKEN IMMEDIATELY TO REVERSE THIS TREND, THERE IS A SERIOUS RISK THAT STOCKS IN PHNOM PENH WILL BE EXHAUSTED BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF
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ADDITIONAL STOCKS OF RICE EITHER FROM ABROAD OR FROM BATTAMBANG. EVEN WITH THESE ADDITIONAL STOCKS, THE RICE SUPPLY MAY NOT BE FULLY ADEQUATE TO YOUR REQUIREMENTS. IT IS THEREFORE URGENTLY NECESSARY TO ENFORCE A DAILY DRAWDOWN FROM STOCKS IN PHNOM PENH OF NOT MORE THAN 450 TONS, AND IF POSSIBLE DRAWDOWNS OF A LESSER QUANTITY. OTHERWISE THERE IS A REAL POSSIBILITY THAT A RICE SHORTAGE COULD PRODUCE AN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CRISIS TWO MONTHS FROM NOW.

F) FUNDAMENTALLY, PERMITTING A RISE IN THE PRICE OF RICE WOULD BRING ABOUT A MORE LIMITED DISTRIBUTION OF THE PRODUCT AND WOULD ALSO PREVENT THE SPECULATION AND HOARDING WHICH MAY NOW BE OCCURRING. A PRICE RISE, ACCOMPANIED BY A PROGRAM TO INCREASE CIVIL AND MILITARY SALARIES, DESERVES YOUR URGENT CONSIDERATION. IN THE MEANTIME, A DAILY DRAWDOWN OF NO MORE THAN 450 TONS SHOULD BE ENFORCED.

G) I AM CONFIDENT, MARSHAL, THAT YOU SHARE OUR JUDGMENT THAT THIS QUESTION IS OF EXCEPTIONAL IMPORTANCE AND THAT IT DESERVES ACTIVE AND IMMEDIATE ATTENTION. MY ECONOMIC ADVISERS ARE READY AS ALWAYS TO CONSULT WITH YOUR OFFICIALS ON THIS PROBLEM. COMPLIMENARY CLOSE. EMORY C. SWANK. END TRANSLATION. SWANK

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